



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Community and Economic Development

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Children's Artwork Shines During Ray at Night

*Large Murals Officially Unveiled at North Park Community Monthly Arts and Culture Event*

SAN DIEGO – As the holidays begin to captivate the hearts of San Diego's children, the season also provides the opportunity for the area's younger set to give something back to the community. On Saturday night, December 10, 2005, at 5 pm, two large murals painted by local area youths will be officially unveiled along the corner of 31<sup>st</sup> Street and University Avenue prior to the start of "Ray at Night" in the North Park community. The murals are designed to help beautify the area and signify the continued progress in the revitalization of this historic community.

"It's wonderful that the North Park community is encouraging children to take an active role in beautifying and revitalizing neighborhoods," said Deputy Mayor Toni Atkins. "Instilling community pride at a young age can only improve our neighborhoods in the future, and we invite everyone to come to North Park, enjoy the Ray at Night event and witness firsthand how this area is quickly becoming a thriving arts community."

The murals are a result of the hard work, creativity, and collaborative effort between the San Diego Children's Museum and the AJA Project, an organization that empowers refugee and underprivileged children through educational programs. The artists, aged between 10 and 15, are also students from El Cajon Valley Middle School and come from a number of countries including Afghanistan, Iraq and Mexico. The project took about two months to complete and the panels depict life in North Park. The children took photographs of North Park and later scaled the images onto the layout for the mural.

"These murals are special in that they not only promote a love for art among children, but also serve a functional purpose in helping improve the look of the North Park community," said Larry Stein, a local gallery owner coordinating the "Ray at Night" activities and board member of North Park Main Street and the AJA Project. "The murals are a welcome addition to the wonderful art currently on display in the Ray Street Arts and Culture District."

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The "Ray at Night" event takes place every second Saturday of the month from 6 pm to 9 pm in the Ray Street Arts & Culture District located in the heart of the historic North Park community, just south of University Avenue and east of 30<sup>th</sup> Street. The district features a collection of artists, including painters, photographers, sculptors and an expressive arts institute.

The City has worked to strengthen the business community, supporting the area's Business Improvement District, Main Street program and other business development efforts. Business owners have worked with the City to revitalize more than 30 storefronts to enhance the appearance of individual businesses and create a more vibrant neighborhood commercial district. Additionally, the building where the children's murals are located is the community's preferred site for the proposed District Three Flagship Library currently under consideration which adds another potential improvement to the City's North Park Redevelopment Project Area and the region as a whole.

For more information about the "Ray at Night" event in North Park contact Larry Stein at (619) 255-2022.

For more information on neighborhood revitalization efforts in North Park contact Jeannie Tidy at North Park Main Street at (619) 294-2501.

For more information on redevelopment activities in North Park, contact the **City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency** at (619) 533-4233 or visit the City's web site at [www.sandiego.gov/redevelopment-agency](http://www.sandiego.gov/redevelopment-agency).

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*With an emphasis on the City's urban core neighborhoods and low and moderate income residents, the Community and Economic Development Department strives to improve the quality of life and ensure a healthy economy in San Diego through job development, business development, neighborhood revitalization, public improvements, redevelopment, social services, and revenue enhancement.*